

A Worthy example of a vertuous Wife, who fed her Father with her own Milk: being condemned to be starved to death, and af- wards pardoned by the Emperor.

The Tune is, *Flying Fame.*



In Rome I read a Noble-man
the Emperoz did offend,
And for that fault he was adjudg'd
unto a cruel end:
That he should be in prison cast,
with Irons many a one,
And there be famisht unto death,
and brought to skin and bone.

And more if any one were known
by night or yet by day,
To bring him any kind of food
his hunger to allay,
The Emperoz swore a mighty Oath,
without remorse, quoth he,
They should sustain the cruell'st death
that could devised be.

This cruel sentence once pronounc'd,
the Noble-man was cast,
Into a Dungeon dark and deep,
with Irons fettered fast:
Where when he had with hunger great
remained ten days space,
And neither tasted meat nor drink,
in this most woful case.

The tears along his aged face,
most plentifully did fall,
And grievously he did begin
for to complain withal:
O Lord, quoth he, what shall I do?
so hungry Lord am I,
For want of bread, one bit of bread,
I famish starve and dye.

How precious is one grain of Wheat,
unto my hungry soul?
One crust or crumb, or little piece,
my hunger to controul:
Had I this Dungeon heapt with gold,
I would forgo it all,
To buy and purchase one brown loaf,
yea were it ne'r so small.

O that I had but ever day
one bit of bread to eat,
Though ne'r so moldy, black or brown,
my comfort would be great:
Yea, albeit I took it up,
trode down in dirt and mire,
It would be pleasing to my taste,
and sweet to my desire.

Good Lord how happy is the Hind,
that labours all the day,
The drudging Mule, the Peasant too,
that at command do stay:
They have their Ordinary meals,
they take no heed at all,
Of those sweet crumbs and crusts y they
do carelessly let sell.

How happy is that little Chick,
that without fear may go,
And pick up those most precious crumbs
which they away did throw,
O that some pretty little Mouse
so much my friend would be,
To bring some old forsaken crust
into this place to me.

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BUt oh my heart it is in vain,
no succour I can have,
No meat, nor drink, nor water eke,
my loathed life to save :
Bring some bread for Christ his sake,
some bread, some bread for me,
I dye, I dye for lack of food,
none but stene Walls I see.

Thus day and night he cryed out,
in most outrageous sort,
That all the Country far and neer,
were grieved at his report :
And though that many friends he had,
and Daughters in the town,
Yet none durst come to succor him,
fearing the Emperors frown.

Yet now behold one Daughter dear
he had as I do find,
Who liv'd in his displeasure great,
for matching against his mind :
Although she liv'd in mean estate,
she was a vertuous Wife,
And for to help her father dear,
she ventured thus her life.

She quickly to her Sisters went
and of them did intreat,
That by some secret means they would
convey their father meat ;
Our father dear both starve, she said,
the Emperours wrath is such,
He dies, alas, for want of food,
whereof we have too much.

Sweet sisters therefore use some means
his life for to preserve :
And suffer not your father dear,
in Prison for to starve :
Alas, (quoth they) what shall we do,
his hunger to sustain,
You know 'tis death for any one,
that would his life maintain.

And though we wish him well, qu. they,
we never will agree,
To spoil our selves, we had as lief
that he should dye as we,
And sister if you love your self,
let this attempt alone,
Though you do ne'r so secret Work
at length it will be known.

O hath our father brought us up ?
and nourisht us, quoth she,
And shall we now forsake him quite
in his extremitie :
No, I will venture life and limb
to do my father good,
The worst that is, I can but dye,
to fit a Tyrants mood,

With that away in hast she hies
and to the Prison goes ;
But with her woful father dear
she might not speak God knows :
Except the Emperour would grant
her favour in that case,
The keeper would admit no Wight
to enter in that place.

Then she unto the Emperour hies,
and falling on her knee ;
With wringing hands and bitter tears,
these words pronounced she :
My hopeles father gracious Lord,
offending of your grace ;
Is Judg'd unto a pining death,
within a woful place.

Which I confesse he hath deserb'd,
yet mighty Prince (quoth she)
Vouchsafe in gracious sort to grant
one simple boon to me :
It chanced so I match my self
against my fathers mind :
Whereby I did procure his Wrath,
as fortune hath assing'd.

And seeing now she is come
he must resign his breath ?
Vouchsafe that I may speak with him
before his hour of death :
And reconcile my self to him,
his favour to obtain :
That when he dyes I may not then
under his curse remain.

The Emperour granted her request ;
conditionally that she :
Each time unto her father came,
should thoroughly serched be,
no meat nor bread, she with her brought
to help him there distressed :
But every day she nourisht him,
with milk from her own Breast.

Thus by her milk he was preserv'd
a twelve month and a day :
And was most fair and fat to see,
yet no man knew which way :
The Emperour musing much thereat,
at length did understand,
how he was fed, and not his Law,
was broke at any hand.

And much admired at the same,
and her great vertue shewn,
he pardon'd him, and honoured her,
with great preferments known.
Her father ever after that,
did love her as his life,
And blest the time that she was made
a loving Wedded Wife.